

MICHIGAN LEgwork

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH

FEBRUARY 2005

A Glimpse at Some Veterans' Success Stories

THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & Economic Growth employs 67 veterans' employment specialists to assist veterans who are looking for a job — or a better job. Many of the veterans served by DLEG are newly separated from the service; others are older veterans who have lost their jobs and, sometimes, their way.

These employment specialists help veterans document their military training and experience and apply it to civilian licensing and certification requirements as well as toward the completion of apprenticeships, on-the-job training programs and college degrees. They assist veterans in finding work, building career skills, and accessing state and federal veterans' services.

To gain an appreciation for the varied and selfless work of these DLEG employees, here's a glimpse at some of the successes our Michigan veterans have achieved recently with an assist from our veterans' employment specialists. They are located at Michigan Works! service centers throughout the state.

Dean Morehead in Holland says his assistance to a homeless veteran resulted in employment as well as a place to live. "After doing follow-up with the employer, the veteran was working out very well. The employer stated that he wishes he could get more like him. After a month of employment, I discovered the veteran had been awarded 'employee of the week' for the company."

James Kehrer in Benton Harbor: "Working with a homeland security employer, we were able to place nine veterans in high-paying security positions, starting at \$13.50 per hour. Within one year's time, they will be earning nearly \$20 per hour.

Working in collaboration with Michigan Rehabilitation Services, we were also able to develop a job for a hearing impaired veteran. The veteran had lost his previous job of 13 years due to his disability. MRS was able to provide him with hearing devices, and he seems to be prospering in his new position in the building maintenance field."

Joe Gabelsberger in Detroit said he assisted a senior noncommissioned naval officer who wanted to work in the Detroit area: "By displaying the local resources, showing the Michigan Web sites and several days of doing role-play for interviewing, a strong, confident applicant was ready for an interview. During the course we pulled up several job orders and faxed his resume to the employers. He was called for an interview and set up two more during the week. He was hired by the security company that handles homeland security for the federal government. Note, this was his first interview and he was hired."

Steve Jackson in Port Huron said he worked with an older veteran "who really needed help with job-seeking skills updating and attitude adjustment. After one-on-one assistance, he has now found full-time employment and no longer feels outdated."

James N. Robinson in Roseville reported that a young woman just discharged from the Air Force told him she wanted to work in the medical field. "She had been a bioen-



vironmental engineering apprentice and had little medical training. She had done a lot of volunteer work, such as Habitat for Humanity and Feed the Hungry and her main goal was to help people. She was planning on furthering her education in the medical field but needed to work so she could help out at home. In about a week, I located a

(continued on page 6)

IN THIS ISSUE:

2) Director's Message

3) Chili Challenge

5) The Power's Off

6) MCTI Paper Gift



MICHIGAN LEGWORK

Published monthly for employees
of the Department of Labor
& Economic Growth
David C. Hollister, Director

Editor: Lynne Breen
Designer: Gina DiNatale Coon

February Issue Contributors:
Marty Alexander, Gerry Aranda,
Jeannine Benedict, Julie
Chrysler, Linda Cook, Donna
Cooper, Sandy Damesworth,
Mary Jeanne DuBuc, Tina
Fullerton, Paul Garrod, Jill
Hookey, Norm Isotalo, Paul
Johnson, Maria Ley, Cindy
Lipa, Patty Miller-Kramer,
Peter Morse, Jeff Mount, Linda
Robinson, Andrea Stolicke,
Amber Sweeney, Susan Turney
and Margaret Westerman.

Articles/photos may be e-mailed
to breenl@michigan.gov or
faxed to 517/241-1580. The
Department of Labor & Economic
Growth is an equal opportunity
employer/program. This news-
letter will be made available in
alternate formats on request.



A Message from the Director

I recently signed an Accessible Meetings and Events Policy, which becomes effective in DLEG March 31. In keeping with federal and state disability rights laws and the value of inclusion, this new policy standardizes the department's planning of and participation in meetings to ensure accessibility for all participants. Here are the major points:

- ❖ Events and meetings planned and sponsored entirely by DLEG will be accessible whether attended by DLEG staff, individuals from outside the department or both.
- ❖ The policy includes, but is not limited to, meetings open to the public, conferences, educational events, press conferences, staff training and retreats.
- ❖ "Accessible" means that all who are qualified to attend will be able to attend, participate in all activities and have access to information in the needed alternative formats in a timely manner that allows full participation during the event.
- ❖ At a minimum, the site will be barrier-free, and additional accommodations will be provided upon request with advance notice.
- ❖ Event announcements should be made 10 workdays in advance or at least the number of days necessary to receive and respond to requests for accommodations.
- ❖ When DLEG staff participate in an event planned and/or sponsored by another organization, the portion of the event presented by DLEG staff should be accessible, and DLEG staff will advocate for accessibility and provide technical assistance to increase accessibility at the entire event.
- ❖ The DLEG bureau participating in the meeting or event is responsible for implementing this policy.

I urge all staff to review the entire policy, which is posted on the Intranet under the Director's column. The address for our Intranet is: <http://www.connect.michigan.gov/portal/site/dleg/>. Questions may be directed to Myrtle Gregg-LaFay, DLEG Americans with Disabilities Act coordinator, at (517) 335-5824.

Numerous requests from staff poured into my office following the Dec. 26 tsunami, asking to continue Casual Wednesdays through February to aid the victims of this horrific natural disaster. I was very touched by your humanitarian spirit and, of course, concurred that our department should do something to aid in the worldwide relief effort.

As a result, Casual Wednesdays resumed on Jan. 12, with the donations for wearing jeans on Wednesdays earmarked for tsunami relief. Please see one of these coordinators to pay your \$2 and receive a participation acknowledgment: Nancy Benjamin, Kathie Bennett, Sharon Bryant, Julie Chrysler, Linda Cook, Amber Lemon, Carrie Martin, Shannon Moreno, Elaine Pohl or Shari Spitzley.

The money raised in the Ottawa Building will be going to the American Red Cross. Bureaus and agencies may wish to select other charities assisting in the relief effort. To identify a reputable charity, please go to <http://www.give.org/news/tsunami.asp>. We are asking each bureau and agency to keep track of the amount of money raised and to let us know the charity selected. Thank you to all of you for your generosity and goodwill.

Stay warm,

David C. Hollister

Chili Challenge Chases Chills

With the outside temperatures hovering in the 20s, the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration's first annual Chili Challenge in Lansing on Wednesday, Jan. 19, was a great way to beat the cold!

Twelve MIOSHA employees participated in the contest. Their pots of chili came in a wide variety of styles — white, traditional, venison, vegetarian, and lamb and sausage — and spiciness.

For a donation of \$3, MIOSHA workers could sample all of the choices and vote for People's Choice. For \$5, they could sample all of the choices, vote for People's Choice and get an additional bowl of chili and cornbread.

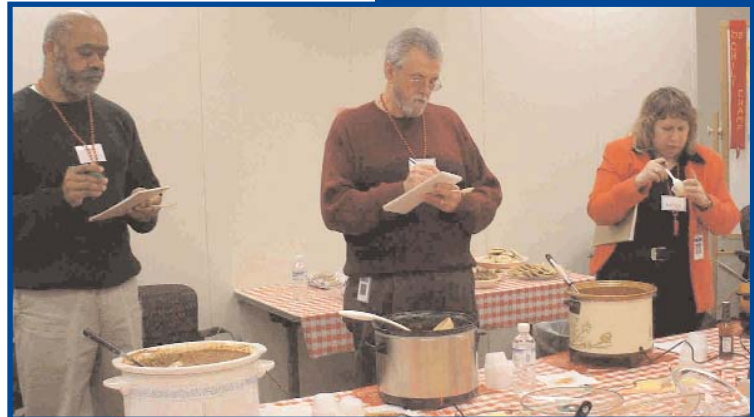
Ken Hines, Don Gibson and Sheila Ide served as judges for first, second and third place.

The winners? Chris Morrison with the Management and Technical Services Division won both first place and the People's Choice award for his "sweet" traditional chili. Coming in second was Kay Salazar, General Industry Safety and Health, with a pot of traditional fare. Aubrey Marron, also with Management and Technical Services, placed third with a spicy vegetarian recipe.

Proceeds from the Chili Challenge will go towards activities to celebrate MIOSHA's 30th anniversary this year.



Chili Challenge winners (l. to r.) Aubrey Marron, Chris Morrison and Kay Salazar.



Taking their chili judging duties seriously are (l. to r.) Ken Hines, Don Gibson and Sheila Ide.

More Accounts of Beneficence

The January issue of *Michigan LEGwork* reported on a number of charitable acts by DLEG staff during the holidays. Here are some additional reports of employee generosity: Jodie Gillespie, acting manager, Customer Service Section, Corporation Division, **Commercial Services**, coordinated a toy collection among her co-workers for the Lansing Marine Corps Reserve Center's Toys for Tots campaign ... **Michigan Economic Development Corporation** staff placed decorations on their lobby-area Christmas tree that represented the purchase of individual phone cards for military personnel stationed in the Middle East ... Employees in the Construction Safety and Health Division, **MIOSHA**, "adopted" a family of four for Christmas. The group collected more than \$600 to purchase gifts for the family. Eric Waters and Brian Renaud, who delivered the presents, said the family asked that they pass along the family's heartfelt thanks for employees' generosity and kindness ... Gerry Aranda and Araceli Diaz, agricultural employment specialists, **Bureau of Workforce Programs**, in Paw Paw, along with Juan Aleman, agricultural employment specialist in South Haven, helped organize a Christmas basket give-away. The event was sponsored by the Southwest Michigan Migrant Resource Council and represented a community-wide effort to fill new laundry baskets with food and toys for needy families. More than 200 families received the baskets; local businesses and residents donated the items.



Laundry baskets filled with food and toys for the Southwest Michigan Migrant Resource Council Christmas basket give-away.

People on the Move



After 24 years of state service, **Blas (Tony) Ramos** hung up his investigator's badge and retired from the Wage & Hour Division Jan. 14. Tony began his state career in 1976 with the Michigan Employment Security Commission before joining the Wage & Hour Division in 1979. In 1983 he joined the Calhoun County Sheriff's Department, but returned to Wage & Hour in 1984, where he served as an investigator for the next 20 years. Tony also spent over 28 years with the Michigan National Guard. Congratulations, Tony!

Congratulations to **Linda Hoisington** with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) who retires Feb. 11 after 28 years of state service. Linda's first position was with the Michigan Liquor Control Commission. She transferred to MRS, where she worked at the Lansing field office for over 10 years. She was promoted to administrative support specialist with MRS's Client Assistance Program. Linda later accepted responsibility for the Customer Service Desk and AWARE Support Desk in MRS's Central Office. She has also served as administrative support specialist for the MRS hearings manager.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy retirement to **Henry Rayn**, program manager and laboratory director for the Laboratory and Equipment Services Section, Management and Technical Services, Michigan Occupational Safety & Health Administration (MIOSHA). Henry will retire effective March 1. He began work as a chemist for the state in January 1972; he has always worked for the MIOSHA program or its equivalent before its formal creation in 1975.

Congratulations to **Kelly Straka**, secretary to the customer service director, Bureau of Workforce Programs, who has been promoted to a departmental analyst position in the Licensing Division, Michigan Liquor Control Commission. Kelly has worked for the state for 20 years.

Congratulations to **Patricia Meyer**, who has been promoted to Safety Section supervisor, Construction Safety and Health Division, MIOSHA. Patty has been with MIOSHA for 15 years and previously worked as a licensed electrician.

Congratulations to **Mark Richard**, General Industry Safety and Health Division, MIOSHA, who has been reallocated to senior safety officer. Mark has been a compliance officer with MIOSHA for the past 15 years.



Tony Ramos

Congratulations to **Debbie Ide**, who has accepted a word processor 7 position with the Construction Safety and Health Division of MIOSHA. Debbie had been a word processor 5 in the Occupational Health Division since 2003. She joined MIOSHA in 1998 as a student assistant in the General Industry Safety Division.

The Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) is pleased to welcome two new counselors. **Euan Singleton**, who retired as a communications officer from the Detroit Police Department after 25 years, has joined MCB's Detroit Regional Office. Euan attended Wayne State University's Rehabilitation Counseling Program and graduated in May 2004. As part of his program, he completed an internship in the Detroit MCB office. **Kimberly Kennedy** is a new counselor in MCB's Lansing Regional Office. She graduated from the University of Maryland in 2000 with a degree in counseling and worked for the past two-and-a-half years as a rehabilitation counselor for the state vocational rehabilitation agency in Delaware. Her case-load assignment with MCB covers Washtenaw, Jackson, Hillsdale and Lenawee counties.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) welcomes **Clifford Wilson** as a new counselor at MRS's Benton Harbor office. Clifford has a master's degree in counseling education from Indiana University. His previous experience includes working as a school and jail therapist for Riverwood Center in Benton Harbor and as a vocational counselor for Indiana Vocational Technical College.

The Office of Career and Technical Preparation (OCTP) is pleased to welcome new consultant **Lynne Listeman**, who is providing services to the programs in the Arts and Communication Pathway, assisting in grant review and approval, providing guidance and services in all categories of Special Populations, and participating in Technical Review, Assistance and Compliance onsite reviews and Office of Civil Rights compliance visits. Lynne has 15 years of experience in education administration, with a background in special education.

DLEG extends a warm welcome to **Alisande Henry**, who has joined the Executive Office as staff support for the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors. Alisande will also be working with staff assigned to the Council for Labor and Economic Growth to make sure the missions of the two councils are in alignment. She will also be working with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to support the work of the Governor's Task Force to Protect Michigan's Military Facilities. Alisande formerly was executive assistant to Lt. Gov. John Cherry.

The Power's Off: A Cliffhanger

By Martin D. Alexander, CHS-III

Let's suppose one day the following takes place. You wake up one morning and realize you had not heard the familiar intermittent buzz that normally wakes you. The illuminated digital numbers on the alarm clock show a blinking 12:00. You find your watch and realize you're over an hour late for work.

The power button on the remote for the TV does nothing. It's the same thing with the light switches — no lights. You wonder, "Is it the house?" The fuse box is checked and is OK. Turning on the portable radio, the announcer is heard reporting about a regional electrical outage affecting a tri-state area. You wake up your spouse and say, ever so softly, "The power's off," the three words in American lexicon we hate to hear.

"I forgot to tell you when I got home last night that the gas tank's almost empty," your wife says soon afterwards. "And," she continues, "I need to pick up some groceries today."

Your attempt to call work on your cell phone is futile; no tone. Now, you're angry that you discontinued the house phone a few months back. You didn't need it then because the cell phone is cheaper. In a short while, you check the car's gas level. It's much lower than a quarter-tank full, fumes almost, but there should be enough gas to get to the gas station. You leave the house to get gas and groceries.

The line of stopped vehicles on the way to the nearest gas station seems odd as you pass it, and then you notice the sign by the gas station: NO POWER, NO PUMPS. Then you pass another gas station; same thing. As you approach the grocery store, it seems to be crowded as you assess the number of cars in the parking lot. You can't help but notice the darkness inside the store.

The steady whine of the auxiliary generator is barely audible as you enter the grocery store. It's

packed inside with more customers than usual. You see from their shopping carts that they're buying bottled water, bags of ice, canned goods, diapers, beer and snack foods. From aisle to aisle, you notice numerous empty shelves. You get what you can, pay at the checkout, and leave. The announcer on the car radio is reporting about a confirmed terrorist cause for the power outage.

Arriving home, the house is much colder than when you left earlier. You have a gas furnace! What gives? You're reminded that with no electricity, the furnace fan or igniter doesn't operate. "Well," you reply, "we can use the fireplace for some heat." There are only a few logs left from last winter. Fortunately, you have city water and extra wood. The natural gas water heater and natural gas stove will continue to work.

As you contemplate siphoning out the gas from the lawn mower to put into the car's gas tank, you also wonder how long this power outage will last. If it's not too long, you'll be able to survive with what you have. After all, you've been reading about this kind of thing in the DLEG *Michigan LEGwork* newsletter these past few months. Without patience, your wife reminds you that you forgot to buy baby food and diapers while at the store.

She is pleasantly surprised when you retrieve the extra stuff, including baby food and diapers, that you bought last month and put away in the back room. Later, as night falls, your family finds comfort from the fireplace heat. This day's almost over. Sirens can be heard faintly from outside. They sound unusual and cyclic, almost like a tornado warning.

To be continued in the March issue of *Michigan LEGwork* ...



Thank You, DLEG, from the Troops

Julie Chrysler in Internal Audit, who has been spearheading the collection and sending of items to our troops, recently received the following thank you note for the DLEG holiday packages sent:

"Just wanted to let you know that I got all your boxes and passed them on to Marines that could use them. Thank you so much for your time and effort. It's nice to know that other people support

our efforts here, other than just our own families. Thanks again."

Julie now has collected many items for Valentine's Day shipments to deployed troops as well as to those at Walter Reed Medical Center. If you would like to donate money to help with the postage, please contact Julie at jachrys@michigan.gov or call (517) 373-6370.

(continued from page 1)

A Glimpse at Some Veterans' Success Stories

DLEG's veterans' employment specialists work in the Customer Service Division of the Bureau of Workforce Programs.

position for an entry-level medical assistant and referred the veteran to this position, which she was hired for. She is now working in the field she loves and going to school part time."

Jim Bishop in Battle Creek worked with a resident in the Transition Living Program, Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, who had completed the requirements of the program. "A referral was made to Waste Management for a driver position, which included a complete benefit package. The veteran was interviewed and our partner agency, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, assisted with purchasing steel-toed work boots and clothing. The veteran was hired."

Gary Hausmann in Iron Mountain: "Working closely and case

managing a veteran, it was noted she has some employment barriers to overcome. I have her enrolled at the VA in their PTSD [post-traumatic stress syndrome] clinic. I also worked with a homeless veteran and an employer. The employer hired the veteran, who now has his self-worth back, and we were able to provide the employer WOTC [Work Opportunity Tax Credit] funding for hiring a disabled homeless veteran. I also worked closely with an employer so his company could become credentialed, and now the company accepts the G.I. Bill for payments to training."

William Tobias in Muskegon said that he "had the honor and privilege to work with a veteran just returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom. I took a look at what he had in the Michigan Talent Bank

and mentioned to him ever so politely that it would not be something that would assist him in locating something decent. We took somewhere close to a half hour revamping his resume and stressing many of the skills he was able to bring to the job table that we share from the military. Less than a week later I received a phone call from the veteran thanking me for the time I took to redo his resume. He could not believe that it had brought so many additional reviews/reads by employers using the Michigan Talent Bank. He was called for an interview, and, after completing the application and including a copy of his resume, he sat and waited for the outcome. The employer told him that he was issuing him a job offer on the strength of his resume."

Michigan Career & Technical Institute Accepts Donation from Sappi Fine Paper

The Michigan Career & Technical Institute (MCTI) received an early and very welcome Valentine's Day gift from Sappi Fine Paper North America in Muskegon — 16,500 lbs. of new paper for the school to use in its printing curriculum.

"It is the largest donation of paper we have ever received," said MCTI Director Dennis Hart. "We usually receive odds and ends from printing companies, of which we're very appreciative, but this donation should last us for quite some time."

Located in Barry County, MCTI provides training in 13 different career areas, including printing, for adults with disabilities.

Jeff Mount, head of the MCTI Printing Department, said the 16,500-plus lbs. of donated paper are a high-quality, coated stock. "We plan to use the paper to print the school calendar and class brochures, but we will use it mainly to teach press operations," he said. "Because the paper is of such fine quality — paper we could not afford to buy ourselves — we will

now be able to have the students work on higher quality projects."

William J. Rock, CPA, manager of planning and financial analysis at Sappi, said the company's Community Relations Committee selected MCTI for the donation because of the school's mission to prepare individuals with disabilities for employment, and also because of the school's tie to printing.

"Sappi Fine Paper North America and the Community Relations Committee believe strongly in giving back to the community," he said. "MCTI assists people who have had some disadvantages and offers training in printing. It's a very nice connection for us."

Sappi Fine Paper North America is considered the global leader in the manufacturing of coated fine paper. The company's global headquarters is in Johannesburg, South Africa. North American operations are headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, with four paper mills — two in Maine, one in Minnesota and one in Muskegon.



Delighted with the donation of high-quality paper from Sappi, MCTI's Printing Department students gather around the shipment for a photo. Clockwise, beginning with six o'clock, are:

Stephanie Baker, Saleta Lynch, Andy Smith, Jeff Mount (instructor), Jeff Scott, Jeremy Suggate (12 o'clock), Joel Vugteeven, Sam McCormick (gray shirt), David Barnes, Adrian Kapp (green shirt), Derek Rose (red shirt), Steve Turner (black shirt) and Holly Brown.

Professional Activities

Here's a fine example of how Michigan Occupational Safety & Health Administration (MIOSHA) staff help employers save money while protecting Michigan workers: Senior Officer **Rick Odorico** recently assisted with a two-day monitoring visit at a company where equipment-guarding violations were addressed. The firm contacted General Industry Safety and Health Division Director **John Brennan** with concerns about the high cost of abatement when this particular operation was going to cease in June. John offered to send Rick back to the plant for abatement assistance. Through Rick's expertise and advice, the firm was able to save more than \$60,000 on the guarding project. The plant safety personnel were impressed with this savings and Rick's advice!

Tom Swindlehurst, CET construction consultant, MIOSHA, and his wife, Pat, have served on the board of Rosebush Manor near Mt. Pleasant for the past seven years. Their volunteer work has focused on the building of a senior living community. Tom and Pat recently received a special tribute from the state of Michigan acknowledging their volunteerism, stating, "We all rely on people like Tom and Pat to help ensure the quality of life of those we love. We applaud the dedication they have consistently displayed and offer our thanks for the manner in which all those of Rosebush Manor benefit from all of their hard work." The tribute was signed by State Rep. Sandra Caul. In addition to the framed tribute, Tom and Pat also received a plaque with a picture of the new building from Rosebush Manor in gratitude.

Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm has reappointed **Bruno Czyrka**, deputy director of the Workers' Compensation Agency, to the Data Collection Agency (DCA) Governing Board. He will represent the executive branch of state government for a term expiring Dec. 31, 2005. Bruno has served on the board since 1993. His reappointment is subject to the advice and consent of the Senate. The eight-member board governs the DCA, which publishes workers' compensation pure premium rates annually. Insurance carriers writing workers' compensation use the rates as a yardstick to compare with their own rate structure. The DCA Board meets once a year to review and approve the pure premium rates proposed for the coming year.

Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm has appointed **Charlotte L. Duncil** to the Michigan Employment Security Board of Review. Formerly an analyst with the Unemployment Insurance Agency, Charlotte served as vice president of the Service Employees International Union Local 517M Human Resource Support Division from 2002 to 2004. She represents employee interests on the board for a term expiring Dec. 31, 2005.

The Detroit Mack office of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) held a Community Open House last fall, where employers, MRS customers and community partners were given information about counseling, tax credits, bonding, worker certification, on-the-job training, job placement and retention services. "Several employers and community partners expressed a great deal of satisfaction after listening to the presentations from staff," said Detroit Mack Site Manager **Paul Johnson**. "We have concluded that their awareness of disability issues and employment options will provide an opportunity for potential hires in the near future." Counselor **Phyllis Smith** organized the event, with assistance from Detroit Mack staff.

Congratulations to **Chuck Nienhuis**, an MRS counselor at the Roscommon County Michigan Works! Service Center in Prudenville, who was honored as 2004 Partner of the Year for providing outstanding service to job seekers and employers. Chuck accepted the award from Michigan Works! at the December meeting of the Region 7B Workforce Development Board. Chuck joined MRS in 1993 after working as a vocational evaluator, work adjustment counselor and supported employment program supervisor for ROOC, Inc.

Congratulations to **Vickie Lyke**, a rehabilitation assistant with the MRS Ann Arbor office, who has been named the 2004 recipient of the Mildred Reed Award from the Michigan Association of Rehabilitation Support Staff (MARSS). The award is given for outstanding performance by a support staff person employed in the rehabilitation field in Michigan. "Vickie is an incredible asset to the Ann Arbor office, with her positive attitude, reliability and upbeat personality," read her nomination letter. "Along with staff, customers know that Vickie is very personable, caring and keeps office morale at its best. Within the office, Vickie has been awarded 'employee of the month.' She has a strong work ethic and you can count on her to go the extra mile while maintaining a sense of humor."

Scott Creswell, Customer Service Division, Bureau of Workforce Programs, has accepted an Intergovernmental Personnel Assignment in Washington, D.C., for one year. He will be working with the U.S. Department of Labor-Veterans Employment and Training (VETS). "Through his experience as a veterans' representative in Project MOVE, Scott has gained a broad perspective on how VETS policies and oversight impact both the field and customers," said **Donna Cooper**, director of the Customer Service Division. "When he returns to Michigan, he will be able to use the knowledge and experience gained at the VETS national office to better serve Michigan veterans." Best wishes, Scott!



Bruno Czyrka



Vickie Lyke

Commission for the Blind Presents 2004 Achievement Honor Roll Awards



Receiving the second annual Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) Achievement Honor Roll Awards are, l. to r.: Richard Meganck, SunTel Services, Inc.; Patricia Woods; Jocelyn Cross; Mary Guy; and, from the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Richard Stevens, Charis Austin and Jim Bonnema. Linda Ackerman and Garnet Prentice, who also received awards, were not present at the Dec. 13 commission meeting.

Four consumers, one employer, one community partner, and one Business Enterprise Program (BEP) operator received the Michigan Commission for the Blind's 2004 Achievement Honor Roll Awards Dec. 13 at a commission meeting in Lansing.

The annual awards are presented to MCB consumers who have been outstanding in achieving their goals, an employer who has shown exemplary leadership and cooperation in providing employment opportunities for persons who are blind, and a community partner who has shown exceptional commitment and dedication in working with MCB and its consumers.

The honorees:

- ❖ Linda Ackerman, a consumer award recipient, began receiving services from MCB in November 2002 to learn how to use her low vision more effectively. She had been employed at a child day care center, and she told her counselor of her goal to some day own and operate a center. After much hard work and careful attention to the small business process, she now owns and operates Play-2-Learn, which is at full capacity with a waiting list.
- ❖ Joycelyn Cross, a consumer award recipient, is a homemaker and retiree from the computer and automotive industries who was diagnosed with macular degeneration and referred to the commission in 1994. She attended a mini adjustment program in Detroit, and later attended the MCB Training Center in Kalamazoo. She has since purchased a computer and is taking correspondence courses through the Hadley School. Always open to new ideas and willing to try suggestions offered to her, she adapts to new challenges and makes life work for her.
- ❖ Mary Guy, a consumer award recipient, began receiving services from the commission as a Youth Low Vision student in the early nineties. In addition, she received special education services for cognitive impairment. In the spring of 2002, she attended the MCB Training Center to work on her daily living skills and mobility. She now has her own apartment and works from 12 to 15 hours per week in Traverse City at a studio assembling printed stationery products. Her employer says that she is always willing to help out and assist others in the shop. She is pleased with her job and active in her community, demonstrating that perseverance and good support services make vocational rehabilitation work.
- ❖ Patricia Woods, a consumer award recipient, was born legally blind. She taught in the Detroit Public Schools for 38 years. When her vision began to worsen, she contacted MCB for help and was placed in the Job in Jeopardy program. With the commission's help, she requested and received the accommodation of a teacher's aide to help with paperwork. She retired from teaching in 2000. She and her husband have since received additional help from MCB in the Independent Living Program. They live in their own home and remain active in their church and community.
- ❖ SunTel Services, Inc., Auburn Hills, an employer award recipient, was honored for its flexibility in adjusting hours and working on transportation needs with an MCB client. In addition, the company's human resources department has shared helpful information on its search and hiring processes and conducted mock interviews to train MCB clients for employment opportunities.
- ❖ Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, a community partner award recipient, has provided a variety of services including rehabilitation teaching, orientation and mobility instruction, counseling, support groups, a low-vision clinic, financial resources and client advocacy services. The organization's ongoing collaboration with MCB benefits consumers through joint ventures such as "Summer in the City."
- ❖ Garnet Prentice, a Business Enterprise Program operator award recipient, operates Gar's Vending at the Detroit Greyhound Bus Terminal with a personal touch that brings high customer satisfaction. In her approximately 21 years with BEP, she has gracefully overcome difficulties that have come her way, and her high standards have made her business a success.

Special Deliveries

Susan Rose: A Kind, Caring Problem Solver

Susan Rose, a rehabilitation assistant at the Livonia office of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), was nominated for a Special Delivery from the Director by co-worker Tracie Lewis-Jennings, an employment specialist.

“Susan has been instrumental in providing excellence and contributing to customer satisfaction by the way she interacts with staff, vendors and customers. She is kind, caring, concerned and a problem solver. She represents our agency and department in a very professional manner and with the highest integrity. She has been instrumental in bridging MRS and our activities with the one-stop. She has been very cooperative and collaborative with all our one-stop staff. She is truly deserving of the special award,” said the nomination letter.

Congratulations, Susan!



Presenting Susan Rose (center) with her Special Delivery is Tracie Lewis-Jennings. Garrett Pazur, site manager of the Livonia MRS office, participates in the happy moment.

Dorothy Day Saves State Thousands of Dollars

Congratulations to Dorothy Day with Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) in Detroit, who was nominated for a Special Delivery from the Director by Sharon Bommarito and Liza Estlund-Olson with the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) and Allan Pohl with FAS because of this highly complimentary e-mail message sent by Sean Douglas with FAS:

“I wanted to send this report (from Dorothy Day) to you to show what a valuable asset she is when it comes to the outstate offices for UIA. The work she has done in Saginaw alone saved a ton of money. The approximately 10 phone and data drops that were installed would have cost around \$2,000 if done by a contractor. The 12 phones that were pulled (for free) from the inventory in the warehouse would have cost at least \$2,400, and the software changes and other programming that Dorothy provided would have cost at least \$2,000 to have a vendor complete this work. I would estimate that just the work in Saginaw saved the department between \$6,400 and \$15,000. In most locations, you install a phone system and there are few if any changes. We all know that does not work in UIA. They have changes daily. This will make the contributions and expertise that Dorothy provides valuable as long as there is a UIA. As far as I know, we do not have anyone else in the department who has these skills. Thanks, Dorothy.”



Helping Dorothy Day (center) celebrate her Special Delivery are Liza Estlund-Olson and Sean Douglas.



The UIA team members who worked on the court decision project are, front row, l. to r.: lead worker Katy Luchonok-McLowery, Oronde Weathers, Betty Hogan-Brown and Barb Studevent; center row, l. to r.: Jean Hawkins, Carrie Dillon, Phyloese Gilbert, Sandra Brewster-Brown, Sharon Peterson and Claudia Dziadziola; and back row, l. to r.: Yolanda Bell, Roynetta Robinson, Juanita Mayes, Loretta Davis-Brazil and Andrea Gibbs. Not pictured: Tonya Anthony, Pam Ferrin, Helen Hightower, Linda Hunter, Terri Jackson, Ruth Maceri and Mary Williams.

Unemployment Insurance Agency Unit Makes Rapid Work of Major Project

Most of the day-to-day work done by Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) staff involves recent events. For example, staff might process an unemployment claim for a worker who was laid off last week or adjudicate an issue about a job separation that happened three weeks earlier.

In May 2004, however, UIA's Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA)/Special Programs Unit took on a project involving claims filed six years earlier.

A court decision affecting more than 51,000 claims and over \$10 million in benefits had to be examined and processed.

UIA expected the project to take up to a year. However, TRA/Special Program staff, with help from other areas, mounted a concerted effort and finished the job in early December 2004, well ahead of schedule.

Governor Cites UIA Employee in Holiday Greeting

In her holiday e-mail message to all state employees, Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm cited a letter to Gerald Beadle, an unemployment insurance examiner with the Unemployment Insurance Agency, Saginaw Remote Initial Claims Center.

The letter had been sent by an unemployed worker and was cited as an example of the many letters the state receives from grateful citizens for work done by state employees. Here is an excerpt from the governor's message:

"Throughout the year, our departments receive dozens of letters from Michigan citizens, grateful for the assistance and kindnesses that you, State of Michigan employees, have demonstrated while doing your jobs. As this year draws to a close, I


want to share with you excerpts from just a few of these letters:

"I would like to bring to your attention an outstanding employee named Jerry B. ... Needless to say, by the time I got connected to Jerry, I had tried for several hours to submit my form for unemployment. So you know that my emotions were at the highest peak possible ... Our whole department was let go for lack of work and, after 22 years with a company, you can just imagine the state I'm in ... So when Jerry took the time to answer my questions and to help me fill out the form, I knew I needed to tell his management what a GREAT job he did. I just can't tell you what that meant. Please make sure you recognize Jerry for all that he is worth."



Gerald Beadle

'Special Delivery from the Director'

I would like to nominate the following staff member to receive a 'Great Job' acknowledgement from Director  Hollister

Name of Nominee	Classification of Nominee
Office/Bureau	Office Location
Submitted By	Telephone of Nominator

The reason I am nominating this person:

Bureau/Office Director		Date
------------------------	--	------

Bureau/Office Director: Please sign and return to DLEG Media & Public Relations, Ottawa Bldg., 4th Floor, Lansing 48909 - Fax: 517-241-1580

We Get Letters ... and E-Mails!

Scott's Enterprises, Inc., located in Roscommon, sent this letter to Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration Director **Doug Kalinowski**: "I would like to thank your department for fulfilling our request for a health and safety presentation and training at our facilities. We are grateful for the time **Cindy L. Zastrow** and **Sherry Scott** (both MIOSHA industrial hygienists with your department) spent reviewing our manufacturing facilities and providing a presentation on health that related to our business operations during their visit 12/22/04. At Scott's Enterprises, Inc., we take safety very seriously. Our safety director takes his responsibilities quite earnestly and was pleased with the positive response these young ladies had to our safety training efforts. I enjoyed the professionalism and sincere safety message sent to my employees and me during their visit. It's nice to have an outside agency give a fresh perspective to our operation's safety program. Again, thanks for your department's help in achieving a safer workplace."

Cary Contracting in Iron Mountain sent this thank you note to **Tom Swindlehurst**, Consultation, Education and Training (CET) Division, MIOSHA: "I wanted to get a note to you and convey how impressed our guys were with the training you put on. Even the subs called to thank me and express how beneficial it was. I am totally convinced, as I'm sure you are also, just how effective that type of training can be. You were very effective at bringing it home to each of them and making them think about their actions. Thanks again."

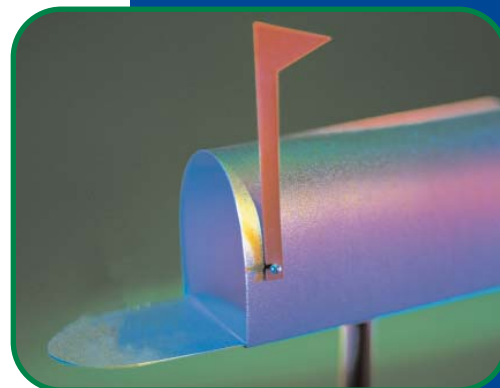
Ed Fredericks, a former MIOSHA employee now with the Department of Natural Resources, sent this letter: "Personally and on behalf of the DNR, I want to thank **Richard Zdeb**, **Bob Carrier** and **Bill Shane** for the great job they did in our two-day MIOSHA/DNR safety training session. We had a packed house and a 'one-standard-per-hour' pace. These boys hit the target with the information, handled our questions and kept the group alive with their humor. This session would not have been possible without CET supervisor cooperation and the good work of **Staci Smith** and **Kurt Wanamaker** on materials. We absolutely appreciate it. You have impacted our institutional intelligence in these areas, and, of course, no good deed goes unpunished. We are hoping to do one or two more of these around the state in the next year. Maybe one in the U.P."

Joseph Keefe and Paul Retel from the Michigan Water Environment Association in Bath sent this thank you letter to **Doug Kimmel**, CET Division, MIOSHA: "On behalf of the MWEA Safety Committee and the AWWA Safety Practices Committee, we wish to express our appreciation of your participation as a speaker at the Fall 2004 Safety Seminars. The success of these programs is largely due to the time and

energy of the participants who give their time to instruct others on important safety and safety-related issues. We think that your enthusiasm for the voluntary protection program was apparent and the presentation was well received. We hope that you consider the time well spent and that you would consider participating at a future seminar."

Kudos to Manager **Elaine Clapp** for her assistance to a school regarding the use of certain chemicals. MIOSHA received a thank you letter via State Sen. Cameron Brown's office that states in part, "Today I spoke with Ms. Elaine Clapp, General Industry Safety and Health Division of MIOSHA, who clarified my question. Her response was timely and well explained. I appreciate her professionalism."

The following e-mail message was sent to **Dorothy Quinn**, manager of Michigan Rehabilitation Services' (MRS) Detroit East District regarding the assistance provided by two MRS counselors: "After a 30-year history of substance abuse, I have eight years clean. I now work for Detroit Wayne Community Mental Health. Last summer, **Claire Gabbara** visited the agency to offer her help to the consumers working there. When I told her my task was to speak to others about recovery, she suggested I get my teeth fixed. It's no secret that we in recovery have self-esteem issues, and since I did not care about my appearance, I didn't think others cared. Claire assigned my case to Ms. **Cathy Hardaway**, and things have been uphill ever since. Ms. Hardaway sent me to a dentist sensitive to the fact I have an addictive personality, and she acted accordingly. Plus she did excellent work. However, this is not the most important thing Ms. Hardaway and Ms. Gabbara did. As I said earlier, most of us in recovery have self-esteem problems. It does not matter what else is done, or the amount of money spent. This stands in our way if it is not dealt with. In fact, I had not even given it much thought until Claire pulled me aside and suggested I improve my image, and she was right. I have since then given speeches not only locally, but also in Lansing and Orlando, Florida. I am a musician, but up until now I have been happy with just doing an occasional house party. After hearing my music, Ms. Hardaway gave me some very needed and very positive reinforcement. I now have a mini-recording spot at home, and am pursuing a career in music. Although I'm sure they were just doing 'their jobs,' Cathy and Claire gave me something millions of dollars can't buy. They gave me my self-esteem back. In all my dealings with them, they treated me with respect usually reserved for doctors and such. Yet they also demonstrated sensitivity to the point I felt I must be their ONLY client. Now when I go out and speak to other consumers, I carry the same values of professionalism and respect I got from them and pass it on."



[More] Letters ... and E-Mails!

Paul Johnson, site manager of MRS's Detroit Mack office, received this letter from a customer: "I received outstanding services as a consumer of your services. Ms. **Lillette Butler** has shown patience, professionalism, guidance and held me accountable for my part in our treatment objectives.

Sir, you know the road we started on was a bit different than this ending, which makes it even more special. The road of defiance led to your decision to make me wait six months before receiving any services from MRS; however, those decisions proved vital because it taught me humility. Let the record show that Ms. Butler is one heck of a rehabilitation counselor and a caring professional."

.....

Karen Shilling at the Battle Creek MRS office received this e-mail message from a customer: "I appreciate very much the work you did on the resume, and for your information, I have a job interview tomorrow with a Kalamazoo area title company. Another thing I just had to tell you, Karen, is you had mentioned about most jobs are found by networking. By goodness knows what chance, I was in the Battle Creek City Treasurer's office paying my property taxes and getting my dog tags and I told the staff there that I was looking for work. They contacted me out of the blue about a job opening up in the Assessing office across the hall from them. Right now, it is posted for employees only to bid on, but the bidding ends tomorrow. If no current employee bids on it, I have a contact in that office that I used to work with at the title company, and she not only agreed to give me a positive job reference, but she also agreed to let me know whether posted job bids are open for public applications. I am really grateful you had mentioned about the networking thing. I always felt funny about blabbing about being out of a job, but as you can see, it just might work. If nothing else, it has really helped my self-esteem to know others are in my corner trying to help out with the job search too. Thanks again, Karen. I owe you big time."

.....
Nikia Belcher, a counselor at the Grand Rapids MRS office, received this customer note: I can't express enough how thankful I am for your help in making my bachelor's degree possible. Working with you at Michigan Rehab has been one of the first glimpses of hope in my struggle with chronic pain. I am beginning to get excited again about my future and being able to use my skills. Although it is difficult for me to accept help, you have made the process very straightforward and thoughtful. I plan to work as hard as my body allows me and I am looking forward to becoming self-sufficient. Thanks again for your time and for this wonderful gift of education."

.....
Scott Creswell, Project MOVE, Workforce Programs, is complimented in this letter to **Neil**

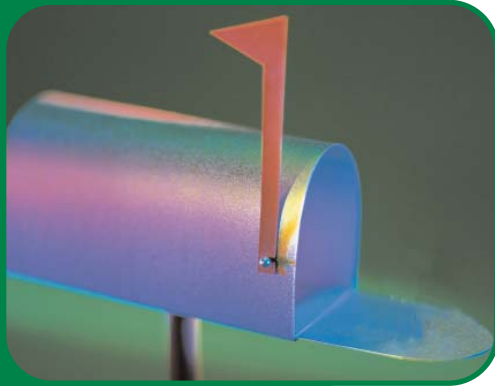
Cooper, veterans' coordinator, Workforce Programs, from a master sergeant with the U.S. Marine Corps: "I am assigned to Marine Wing Support Squadron 471 Detachment B aboard Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Michigan. I am writing to you in regard to the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) class I attended at the base from 14 through 17 December 2004. I have served on active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps for 22 years and during that time I have learned to concentrate not on myself, but those around me. I am retiring from the Marine Corps in 2005 and attended the class to prepare for that departure. The preparation, attention to detail and willingness to assist I received from the members of this service were, in my opinion, 'noteworthy.' As I stand ready to start my new life, I am comforted by knowing that there are veterans out there who still care about veterans and are willing to give their all for each other. I would like to offer you my sincere 'thanks' for caring enough about the servicemen around you to offer us the services of Scott Creswell. His motivation, professional knowledge and military experience contribute to the attitude of the entire class. Again, sir, thank you for watching out for us."

.....
A veteran job seeker sent this letter praising **Paul Bertagnoli**, veterans employment representative in Houghton: "I would like to express my gratitude for the help given to me from the veterans employment specialist in Houghton, Michigan, Mr. Paul Bertagnoli. Paul has helped me by using the Internet; I don't have a computer of my own. It is not an easy task for someone my age—I'm 68—and if it was not for his help, I wouldn't have the job he helped me find in December 2004."

.....
Alesia Brown, state coordinator of the Alien Labor Certification program, Bureau of Workforce Programs, received the following letter from an attorney in Rochester: "The case I filed today might be the last RIR case that I file with your office. I would like to take this opportunity to express great appreciation for your outstanding efforts. I have filed labor certification cases with your office for nine years. I have experienced professional services, which made my life, as an immigration attorney, much easier. For this, I would like to thank you very much."

.....
Cathy Jenks and **Lori Burton**, Corporation Division, Commercial Services, received the following: "Thank you for your time today. It was a pleasure having been served by you and your associate. It is not always the case that a customer gets treated with the kindness and attention that the two of you shared with me."

.....
Tracy Goss, Corporation Division, Commercial Services, received a happy note from a customer he assisted, who said: "Thanks again for your help. It's rare to get such a quick response, but Michigan state government seems to be on the ball!"



[More] Letters...and E-Mails!

Ann Millben, Licensing administrator for the Real Estate Board, received this note about **Rita Burnett**: "What a pleasant surprise! Just a short e-mail to let you know how much I enjoyed working with Rita Burnett to obtain my Verification of Licensure. She was a pleasure to work with and absolutely went the extra mile to comply with my request in as short a time as humanly possible. Ms. Burnett is a real asset to the state of Michigan."

Marla Neubaum, a former client of the Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) who worked as a contractual support staff person at MCB's Detroit office for the past three-and-a-half years, wrote the following letter to MCB staff: "Today [January 14], as a lot of you all know, is my last day with MCB. My husband and I have accepted a position at the Smokey Mountain Home for Children [in Tennessee]. We will be house parents in this orphanage ... Being a part of the entire MCB has been such an honor. Each day, when you get up early in the morning and you just feel like not coming in, maybe feeling like you don't make a difference, think of clients like me ... When I was declared legally blind, my husband of 17 years left me and my three boys because he couldn't deal with it. I was devastated. I had two choices, I could sit on my couch and give up or I could do something about it. After meeting **Betty Rush** and **JoAnn Woodward** (my rehabilitation teacher and counselor) and attending the mini adjustment program, my life began to change. The mini adjustment program gave me the reassurance that I could still have a life. At that time, I had no idea how bad my vision was going to get. At the mini adjustment I met blind individuals who had college degrees, homemakers, successful employees ... I was totally astounded. I had no idea that people with legal blindness could accomplish the things that these people had accomplished. It was very encouraging to me. After that MCB sponsored my schooling. MCB made the difference in my life. It was the helping hand it took to give me my life back. Working for MCB has allowed me to give a little back to so much that MCB gave me. Keep up the good work. Your job is important! You may not realize it but from the readers and drivers to the management, you all are life savers to people just like me."

Andy Metcalf, director of the Bureau of Commercial Services, was complimented for his presentation to the Michigan Contract Security Association from the president of the Michigan Contract Security Company: "Thank you very much for your informative presentation at the annual meeting of the Michigan Contract Security Association yesterday. Once again, Andy, you've done an outstanding job of presenting the opera-

tional philosophy of the Department of Labor & Economic Growth and communicating their goals to our organization. Your lecture was a very fitting end to a day of outstanding presentations. I have received a number of very positive comments from our membership, many of them expressing gratitude that you are willing to take the time to address us in person; need I tell you what that means to us? Further, each time we prepare for one of these meetings, your name is always mentioned as a requested speaker; I think that is an excellent indicator of the high regard in which we hold both you and your department."

DLEG Director **David C. Hollister** received the following letter complimenting **Gabe Basso** in the Licensing Division, Commercial Services: "I applied for a builder's license using the incorrect form for my business type. Mr. Basso was extremely helpful in all regards in correcting my error. More than that, Mr. Basso actually called me as soon as my license number became available. I assume he did this because I explained to him earlier that I needed to start working as soon as possible with the new license. Mr. Basso is an excellent representative of your department and the services it provides to the public."

Frank Spano, an unemployment insurance examiner at the Unemployment Insurance Agency's (UIA) Saginaw Remote Initial Claims Center, was the subject of the following thank you note recently sent to UIA Director **Sharon Bommarito** by a Grand Rapids area unemployed worker: "I am writing to commend Frank Spano. Frank and I spoke this morning when I called to file an unemployment claim. Frank was not only efficient; he was extremely helpful and appeared to genuinely care about my situation. My thanks to Frank and to you for having people like him on your staff."

Robin Norton in DLEG's Office of Policy & Legislative Affairs passed along a thank you from Matt Kurta, a member of State Sen. Michael Prusi's staff. Matt expressed a "greatly appreciated thank you" on behalf of the senator and his staff to **Lori Merchant**, a member of UIA's Legislative Centralized Response Team (CRT) in Lansing. Late on a recent Friday, Lori helped one of the senator's constituents with an unemployment insurance issue and stayed in the office until she was certain the issue was resolved. The senator's office also commended the agency's entire **Centralized Response Team**, saying CRT members are terrific to work with and their help with those in need is a valued service.

